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THE GREEN DEMON

and Other Sufi Tales



Amar Chitra Katha

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THE GREEN DEMON and Other Sufi Tales

While the word *Sufi* gained currency only in recent centuries, these seekers of TRUTH have been in existence for a much longer period.

A wise teacher is one whose goal is to teach a student *how* to learn and not merely *what* to learn. He helps the student to discover and fulfil his own potential. And this is what the true Sufi Master aspires to do — to help the seeker discover and fulfil his potential for supreme consciousness.

The seeker must see mankind which includes himself and the human predicament as they really are. This is the first step towards his goal. And one of the many tools the Sufi master uses to create and increase awareness in the seeker is the illustrative tale. While many of the tales that have come down to us might appear cryptic, sometimes even nonsensical, their import is clear to those in whom a certain degree of awareness has already been attained. The stories adapted in this Chitra Katha for our young readers, however, are quite explicit in their import.

It is interesting to know that the development of Sufi thought and practices have been influenced, directly and indirectly, by both Upanishadic and Buddhist philosophy.

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THE GREEN DEMON



A YOUNG MAN WANDERED INTO A FIELD WHERE A GROUP OF MEN WERE HARVESTING WHEAT.



SUDDENLY THE MEN STOPPED WORKING ...



THE MAN RAN TO THE SPOT.



HE PULLED OUT A KNIFE FROM HIS WAISTBAND.

DON'T BE AFRAID.
I'LL KILL YOUR
DEMON FOR YOU.



HE CUT THE MELON OFF
ITS STALK AND HELD IT
IN ONE HAND.



THEN TO THE HORROR OF THE PEASANTS ...



...AND BITING INTO IT, WALKED TOWARDS THEM.



HE EATS DEMONS!
HE'LL KILL AND
EAT US NEXT.

WE WON'T
GIVE HIM A
CHANCE! LET'S
DRIVE HIM AWAY.
COME ON!



THE MEN WHO FEARED
THE UNKNOWN FRUIT COULD
BE QUITE DARING WHEN IT
CAME TO ONE OF THEIR
KIND.



THEY'RE MAD!
STARK, STARING
MAD!



AND HE FLED FROM THE SCENE.



WHEN THE NEXT HARVEST SEASON
CAME ROUND, ANOTHER MELON WAS
SPOTTED.

IT'S COME AGAIN!
RUN! RUN FOR YOUR
LIVES!



WHAT ARE YOU
RUNNING AWAY
FROM, MY
FRIENDS?

A
DEMON,
SIR.



A
DEMON?
WHERE?

IT'S COMING
OUT OF THE
EARTH IN THE
MIDDLE OF
OUR FIELD,
SIR.

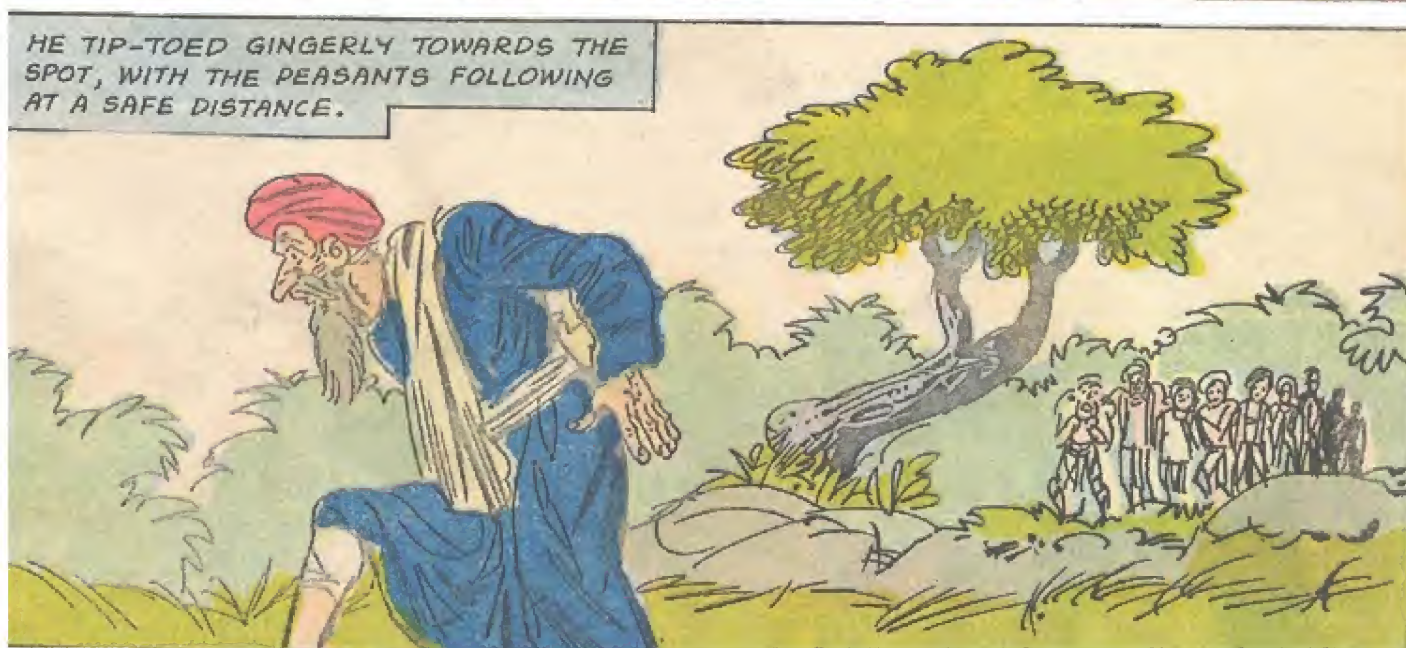


CAN YOU
DESCRIBE
IT TO ME?

IT HAS A LARGE,
ROUND, GREEN
HEAD AND...

... AND LONG,
LONG ARMS,
SIR.







FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS, HE DID NOTHING BUT OBSERVE THE MELON. THEN —

IT HAS NOT MOVED IN ALL THESE DAYS.



I AM GOING TO TOUCH IT TODAY.

BE CAREFUL, SIR.



IT DOESN'T MOVE EVEN WHEN HE TOUCHES IT.

IT COULDN'T BE A DEMON. THEN WHAT IS IT?



SOON, ONE BY ONE, THE PEASANTS CAME FORWARD AND TOUCHED THE MELON.

IT'S HARMLESS. ABSOLUTELY HARMLESS!



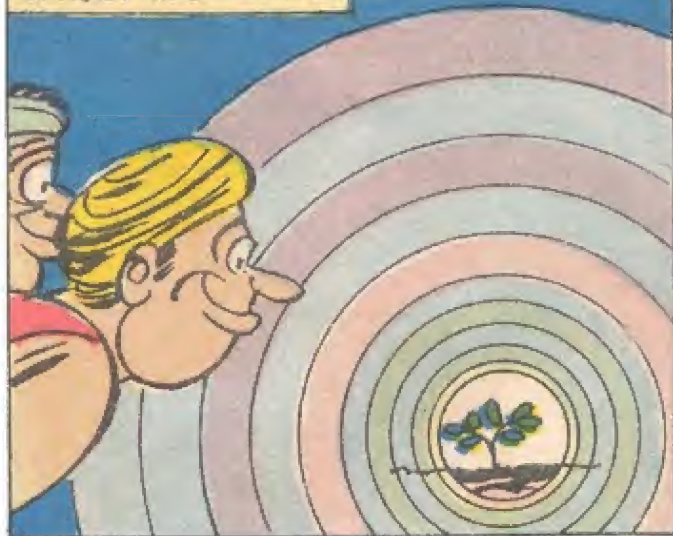
IT'S NOT A DEMON. BUT IF IT'S NOT A DEMON, WHY HAS IT COME HERE?

IT HAS NOT COME HERE.





THEY PATIENTLY WATCHED THE SEEDS
SPROUT AND GROW.



AT LAST, ONE DAY—

LOOK! THEY
HAVE BECOME
AS LARGE AS
OUR DEMON!

YOUR DEMON
HAS A NAME.
IT IS CALLED
A WATER-MELON.



AND IT CAN
SAFELY BE
EATEN.



HE CUT OFF A SLICE AND BIT INTO IT!

SEE? IT IS
DELICIOUS!

LET ME TASTE
IT TOO,
SIR.



SOON —

HOW CLEVER WE
ARE! WE HAVE DIS-
COVERED SOMETHING
NEW TO EAT!

SOMETHING TASTIER
THAN ANYTHING WE'VE
EATEN SO FAR!



HAD THE FIRST MAN USED THE SECOND
MAN'S APPROACH, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN
THE ACHIEVER OF THIS MIRACLE.



THE PERFECTIONIST

THERE WAS ONCE A CARPENTER WHO PRIDED HIMSELF ON THE QUALITY OF HIS WORK.

HMM-M. GOOD. BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH. IT NEEDS IMPROVING. NOW LET ME SEE..



JUST THEN A MAN WALKED IN.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, SIR?

MY WIFE HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH A CHILD.

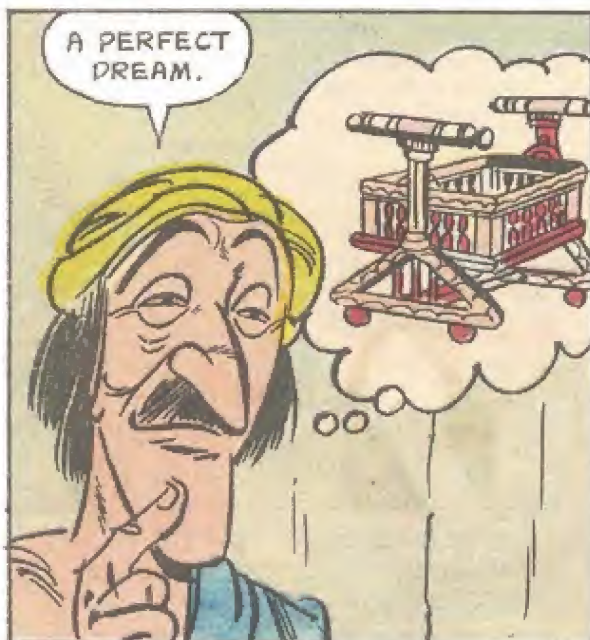


I NEED A CRADLE.

YOU HAVE COME TO THE RIGHT MAN. I'LL MAKE YOU THE BEST CRADLE YOU HAVE EVER SEEN.



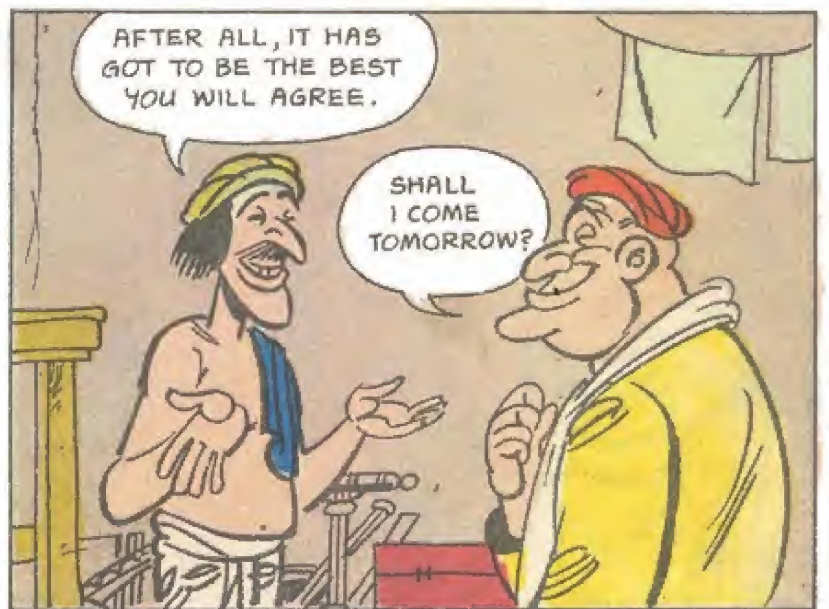
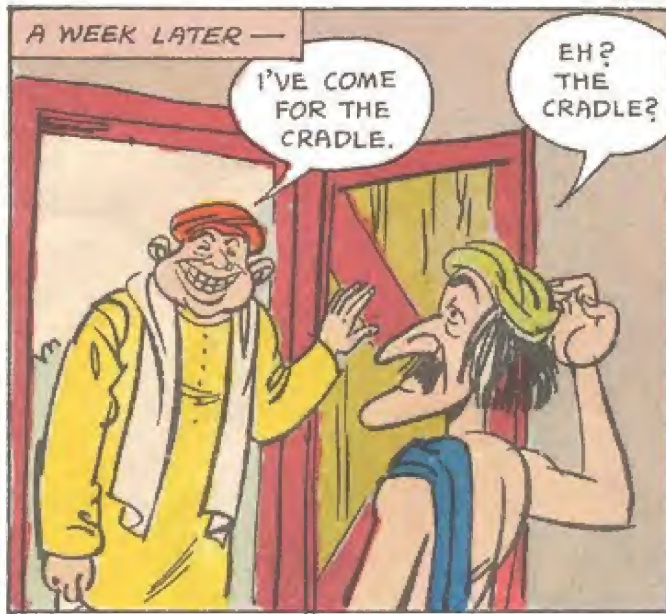
A PERFECT DREAM.

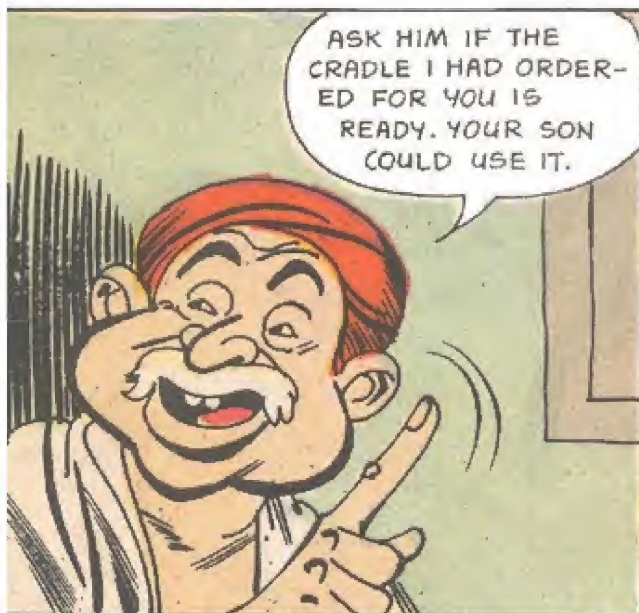
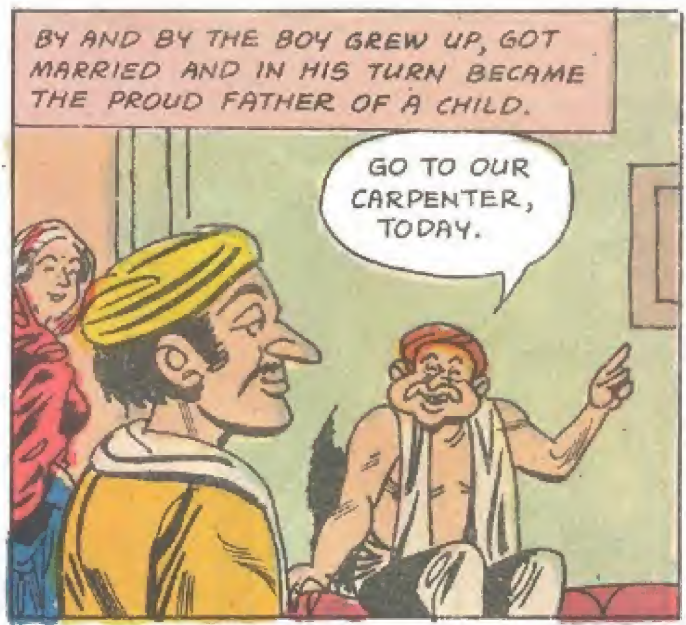


WHEN CAN I COME FOR IT?

IT SHOULD BE READY IN A WEEK FROM NOW.









THE THIEF, THE OLD WOMAN AND THE PRIEST

A THIEF ONCE CAME TO THE
HOUSE OF AN OLD WOMAN
TO SEE WHAT HE COULD
STEAL.



SHE'S STILL
AWAKE.
SHE'S MOANING!

O.O.O.O.O!
AAAAA! WILL
I NEVER BE
RID OF IT?



OH, THIS DIB-DIB
IS WORSE THAN
THE PLAGUE.

SHE'S SUFFERING
FROM SOME DIS-
EASE WHICH IS
WORSE THAN THE
PLAGUE.



IT WILL BE THE
DEATH OF ME!
OH! THIS
DIB-DIB!

OH, GOD!
AND I'VE BEEN
BREATHING
THE AIR
OUTSIDE
HER ROOM!



I'M SHIVERING! I'M
FEELING FEVERISH!
HAVE I CAUGHT
IT TOO?



SUFI SAINTS OF INDIA

Script : Swarn Khandpur
Illustrations S.K. Parab

THE SUFIS WERE SAINTS OR MYSTICS OF PERSIA WHO FORMED THEMSELVES INTO SEVERAL ORDERS AND SPREAD OUT TO DISTANT LANDS. SOME OF THEM LIVED AS HOUSEHOLDERS.



KHWAJA MUINUDDIN OF THE CHISHTI ORDER CAME TO INDIA IN THE 12TH CENTURY AND SETTLED DOWN AT AJMER. HIS PIETY AND HUMILITY ENDEARED HIM TO HINDUS AND MUSLIMS ALIKE. THEY AFFECTIONATELY CALLED HIM GARIB NAWAZ, (ONE WHO CHERISHES THE HUMBLE). HIS TOMB HAS BECOME A PLACE OF PILGRIMAGE FOR HIS FOLLOWING ALL OVER THE WORLD.



AFTER HIS SACK OF DELHI IN 1398, TIMUR WAS RETURNING HOME TO SAMARKAND, LADEN WITH GOLD AND RICHES. SUDDENLY AT A PLACE IN PUNJAB, THE CARAVAN STOPPED.

THE HORSES REFUSED TO MOVE. TIMUR BECAME FURIOUS. WHEN TOLD THAT THE PLACE WAS SANCTIFIED, TIMUR ROARED,

"BY WHOM?"

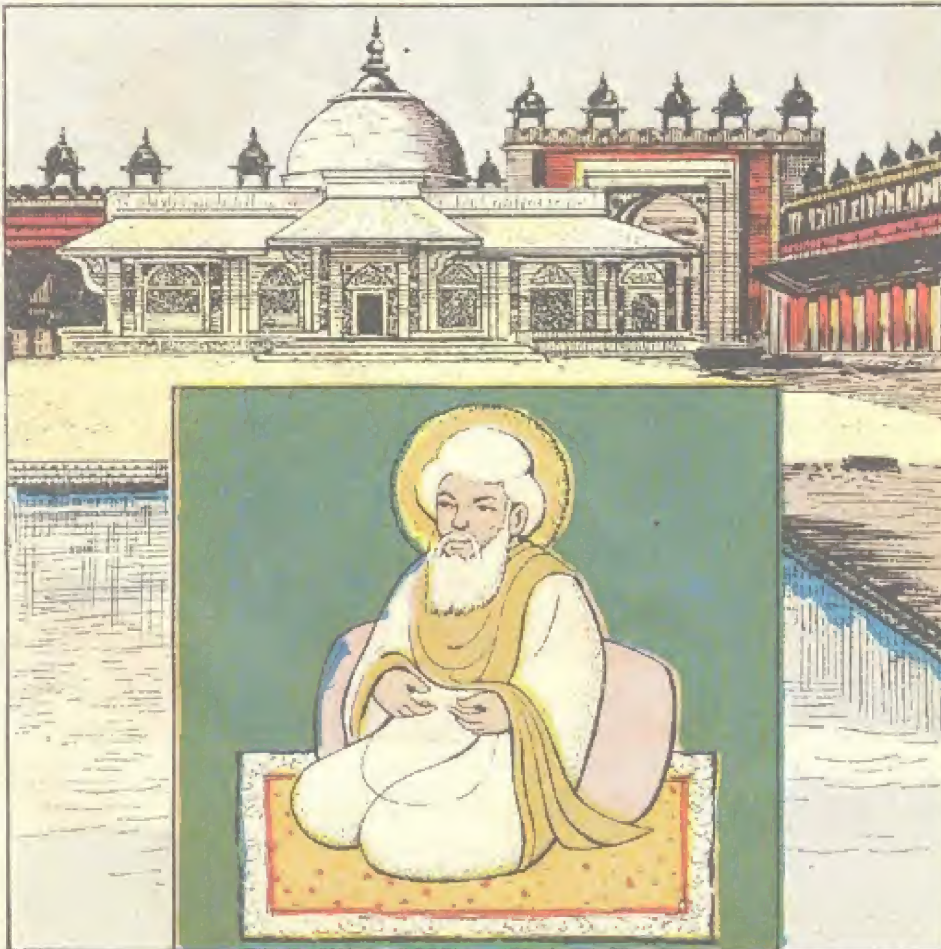
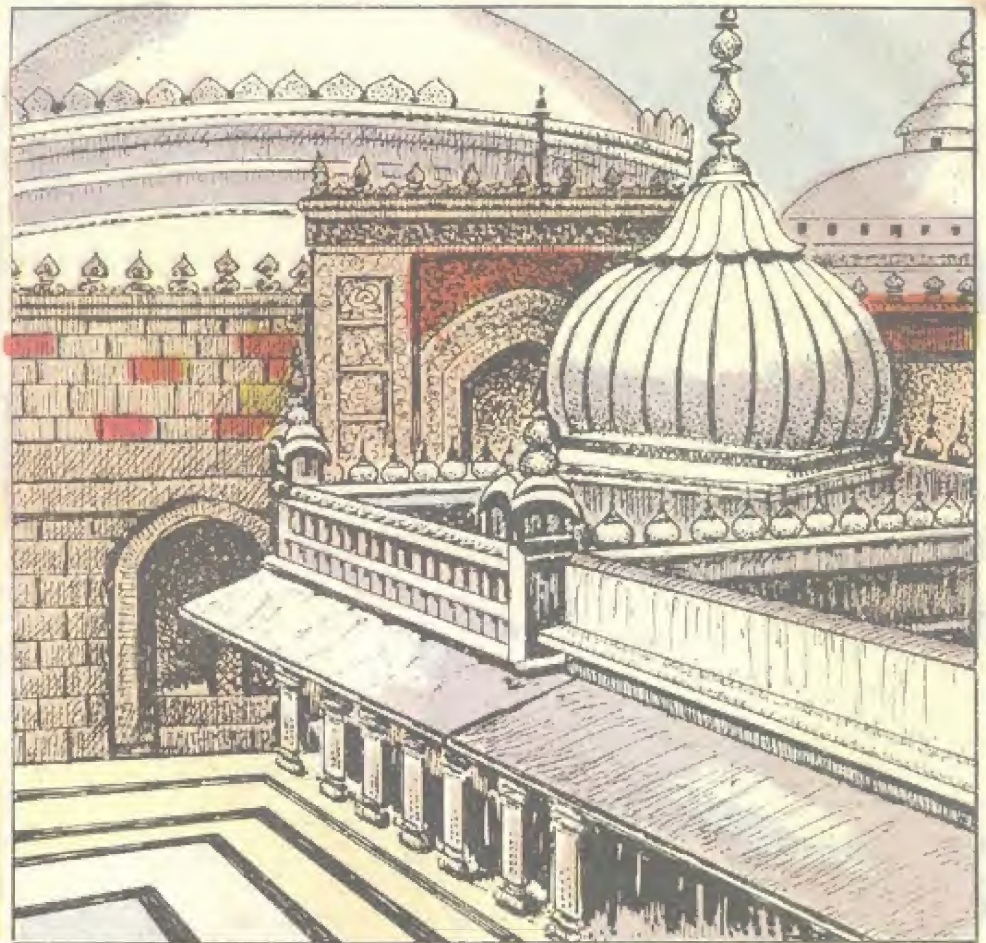
A VOICE ANSWERED: "BABA FARID, THE KING OF KINGS."

TIMUR, THE STORY GOES, BOWED TO THE MEMORY OF THE SAINT AND SPENT THE NIGHT AT THE DURGAH (TOMB) OF BABA FARID.

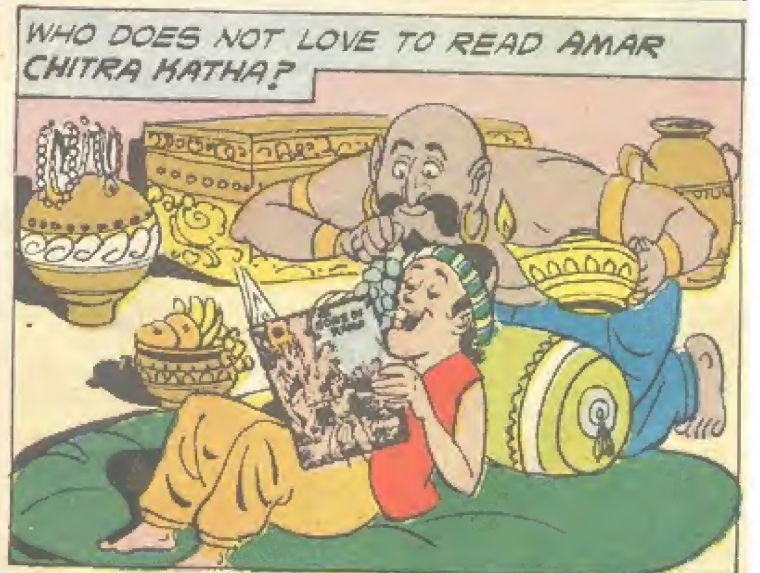
BABA FARID THE MYSTIC WAS POPULARLY KNOWN AS GANJ-SHAKAR (TREASURER OF SWEETNESS). IT IS SAID THAT AS A CHILD HE WOULD GET SOME SUGAR FROM HIS MOTHER AFTER EVERY PRAYER. ONE DAY SHE FORGOT TO PUT IT UNDER THE PRAYER MAT. BUT BY SOME DIVINE POWER, SUGAR DID APPEAR WHEN FARID TURNED TO TAKE HIS REWARD! HIS HYMNS ARE INCLUDED IN THE GRANTH SAHIB, THE HOLY BOOK OF THE SIKHS. "DO NOT GIVE ME SCISSORS," HE WOULD SAY. "GIVE ME A NEEDLE. I SEW, I DO NOT CUT."




ANOTHER GREAT
SUFİ WAS
NIZAMUDDIN
AULIYA WHO
SETTLED IN
DELHI AND SPENT
HIS LIFE IN
THE SERVICE
OF GOD AND
HIS CREATURES.
AROUND HIS
TOMB HAS
GROWN A
SETTLEMENT
POPULARLY
REFERRED TO AS
"SUFİ BASTI".



SHEIKH SALIM
CHISHTI, A SUFI
SAINT OF EMPEROR
AKBAR'S TIME,
HAD SETTLED
DOWN AT SIKRI
NEAR AGRA. IT
WAS WITH HIS
BLESSINGS THAT A
SON WAS AT LAST
BORN TO AKBAR.
THE CHILD, NAMED
SALIM AFTER THE
SAINT, LATER
BECAME EMPEROR
JAHANGIR.
AKBAR BUILT A
MARBLE TOMB FOR
THE SAINT AT
FATEHPUR SIKRI.



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SHE RAN ALL THE WAY TO THE HOUSE OF THE LOCAL PRIEST.



WHEN THAT SAVANT SAW HER APPROACHING HIS HOUSE —

I WONDER WHAT THE WIFE OF THAT THIEF COULD WANT AT THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT!



HE SOON KNEW.

O HOLY SIR! MY HUSBAND IS POSSESSED BY A SPIRIT. PLEASE COME AND SEE HIM.



THIS IS WHAT I'M HERE FOR, AREN'T I? WHATEVER THE HOUR I MUST GO.

DON'T ASK ME TO WAIT TILL MORNING, SIR.



IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE.

DID I SAY I WOULDN'T COME? LEAD ME TO YOUR HOUSE!

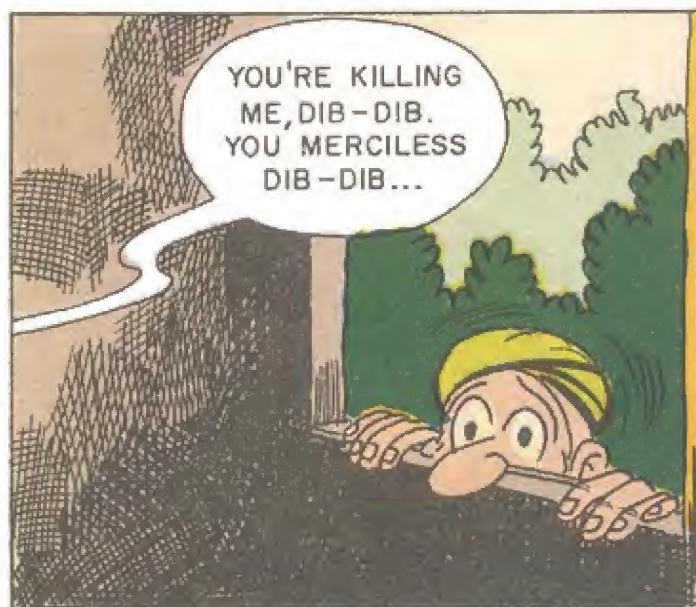
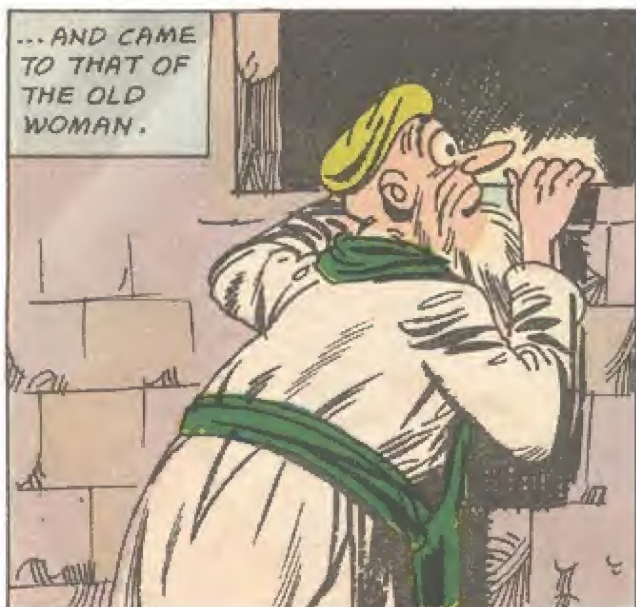


AND SO —

AH, MY HUSBAND! YOU WILL SOON BE RID OF DIB-DIB.









GOT YOU!



SHE WAS SHOCKED TO SEE WHO IT WAS.

YOU!
FOR SHAME!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE MY WINDOW AT THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT?



Y-YOUR DIB-DIB HAS ME, TOO, IN ITS GRIP... BOTH MY BODY AND MY SOUL ... MY DAYS ARE N-NUMBERED...

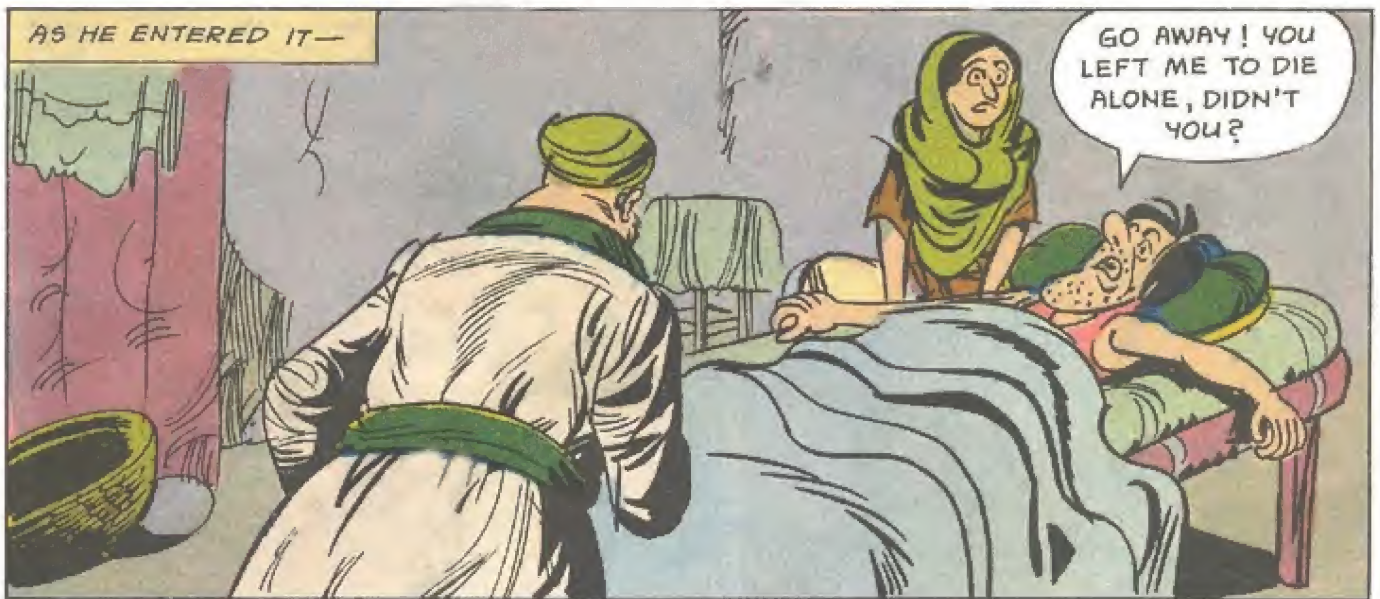


OH, YOU FOOL! YOU HEAR ME WAIL ABOUT DIB-DIB AND YOU IMAGINE ALL SORTS OF THINGS. PAH!



AND TO THINK I REVERED YOU ALL THESE YEARS! PAH! IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT DIB-DIB REALLY IS, STOP THAT SHIVERING AND LOOK IN HERE.





THE PRIEST MUMBLED SOME WORDS OVER THE WATER IN HIS HAND.



NOW PROMISE ME YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN STEAL.

I PROMISE!



AWAY, DIB-DIB! I SAID AWAY!



DON'T DARE RETURN AND TORMENT THIS MAN AGAIN!



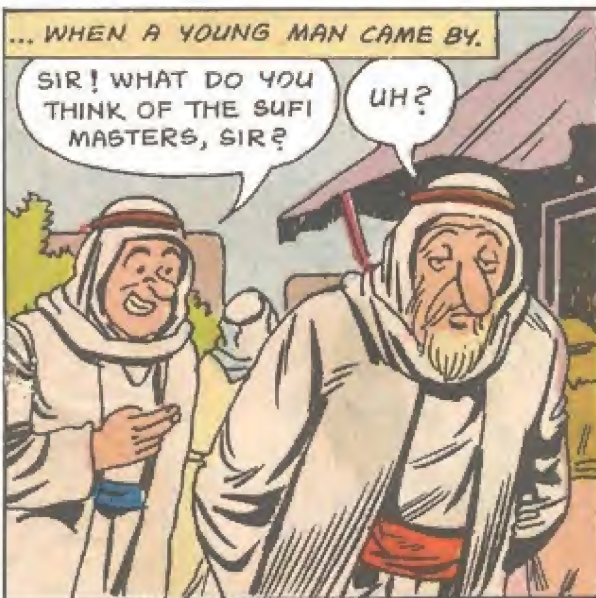
I'M CURED!
I'M CURED!



AFTER THAT, THE THIEF, OF COURSE, KEPT HIS PROMISE. THE PRIEST CONTINUED TO BE RESPECTED AS THE HOLY MAN OF THE PLACE. AS FOR THE OLD WOMAN, SHE COULD NOT FOR THE LIFE OF HER FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE USE OF THE PRIEST.



A VENERABLE OLD MAN
WAS WALKING DOWN A
STREET, LOST IN HIS
OWN THOUGHTS...



... WHEN A YOUNG MAN CAME BY.

SIR! WHAT DO YOU
THINK OF THE SUFI
MASTERS, SIR?

UH?



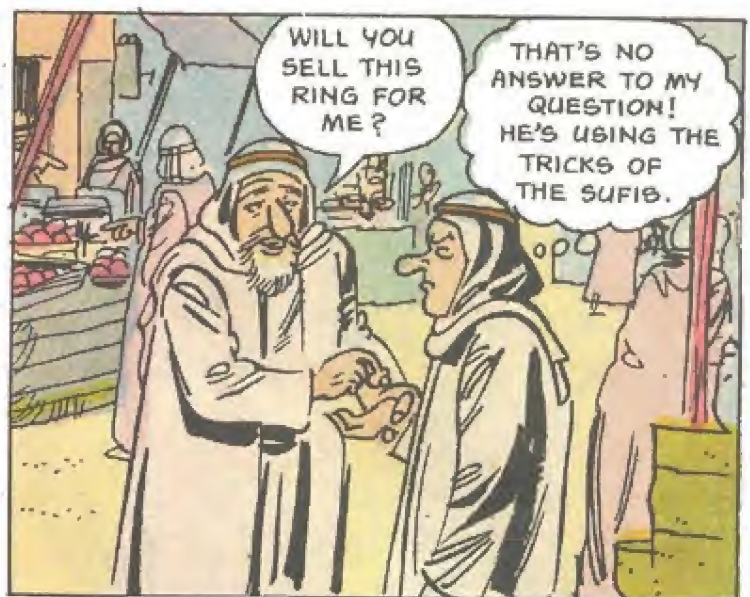
THE SUFI MASTERS,
SIR. I HAVE NO RESPECT
FOR THEM. I THINK THEY
ACT MYSTERIOUS AND
SPEAK IN RIDDLES
BECAUSE...

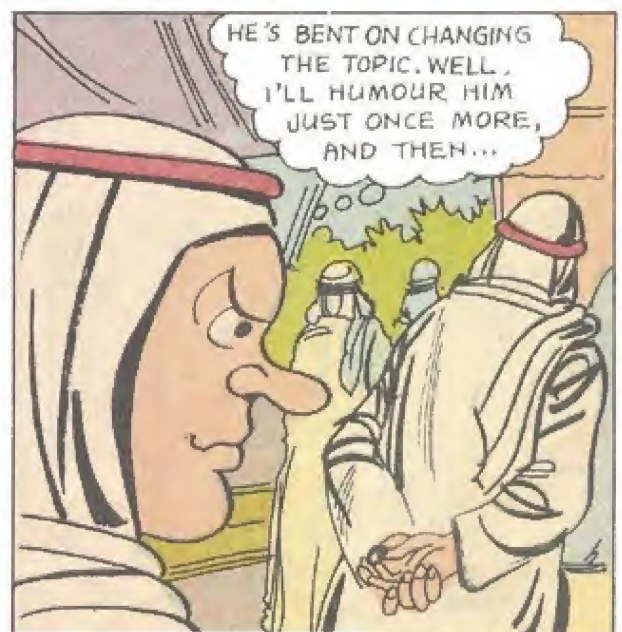
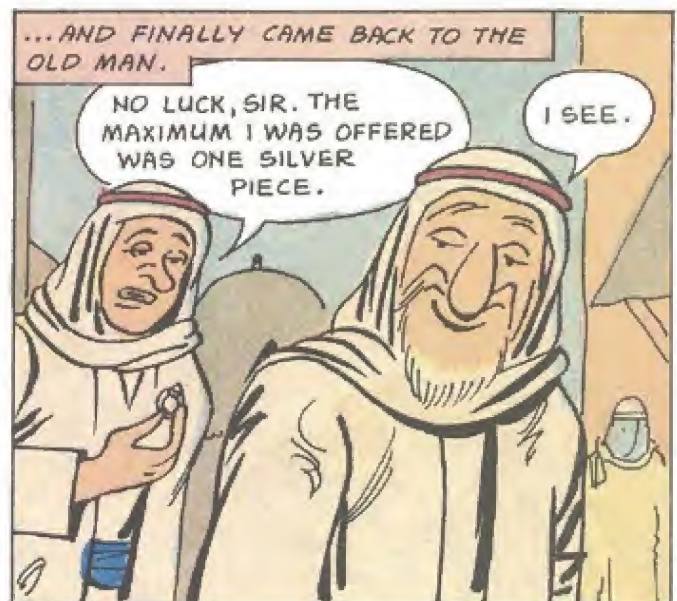


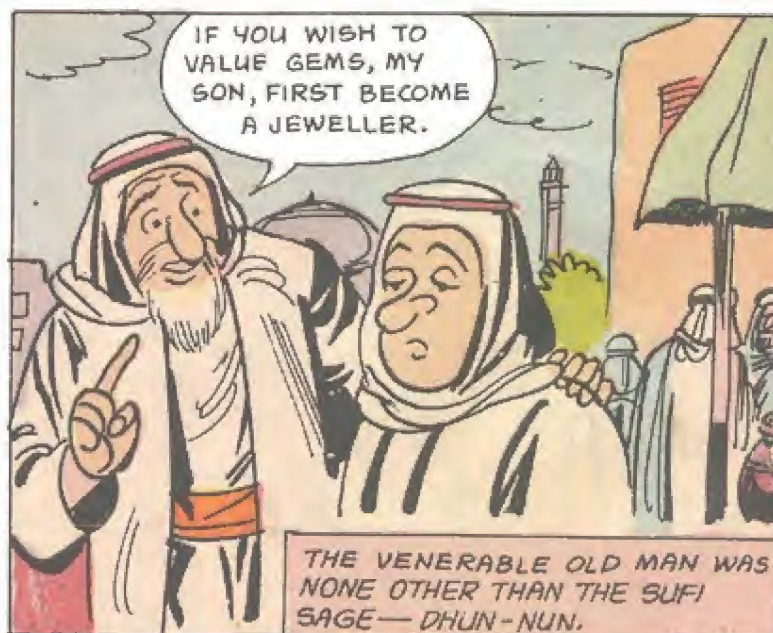
... BECAUSE THEY
WANT TO CONFUSE
US. BUT THEY WILL
NEVER SUCCEED.



I PERSONALLY HAVE
NO FAITH WHATSOEVER
IN THEIR WISDOM. THEIR
IDEAS ARE ALL WRONG.

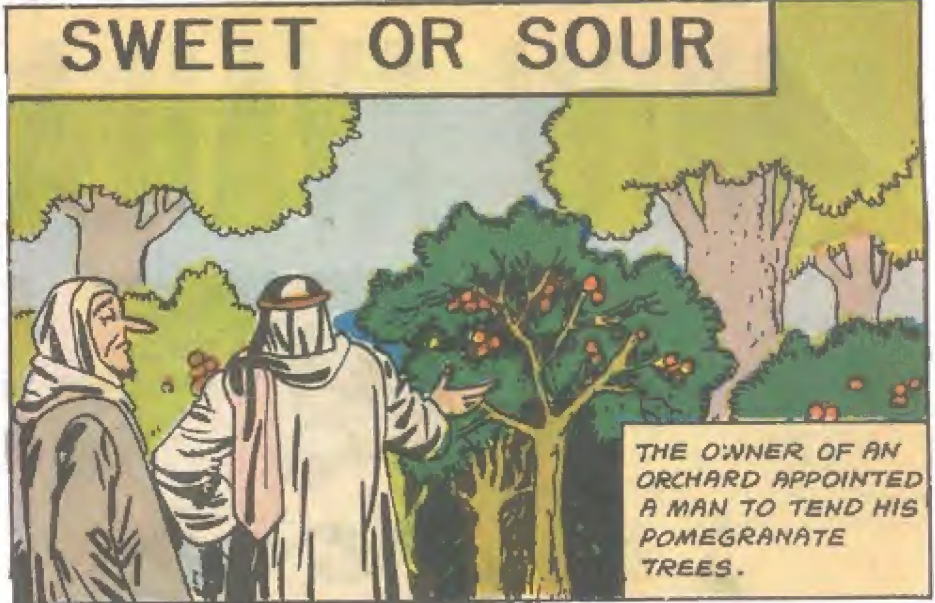








SWEET OR SOUR



THE OWNER OF AN ORCHARD APPOINTED A MAN TO TEND HIS POMEGRANATE TREES.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, AS HE WAS WALKING THROUGH HIS ORCHARD —

I'M THIRSTY. GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE POMEGRANATES.



THE MAN PLUCKED A FRUIT AND GAVE IT TO HIM.

HERE YOU ARE, SIR.



WHEN THE OWNER BEGAN TO EAT IT —

UGH! IT'S SOUR. GIVE ME ANOTHER.



BUT THE NEXT ONE WAS EVEN MORE SOUR.

AFTER TASTING AND REJECTING SEVERAL, THE OWNER LOST HIS TEMPER.

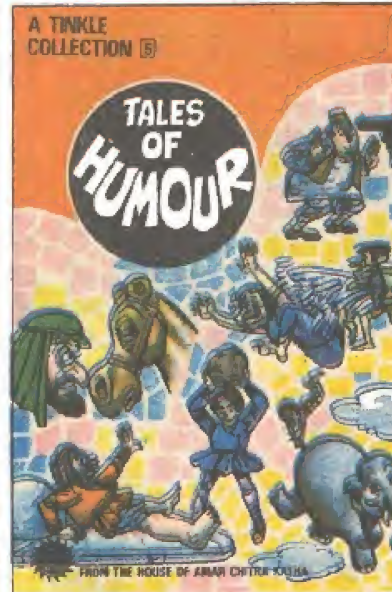
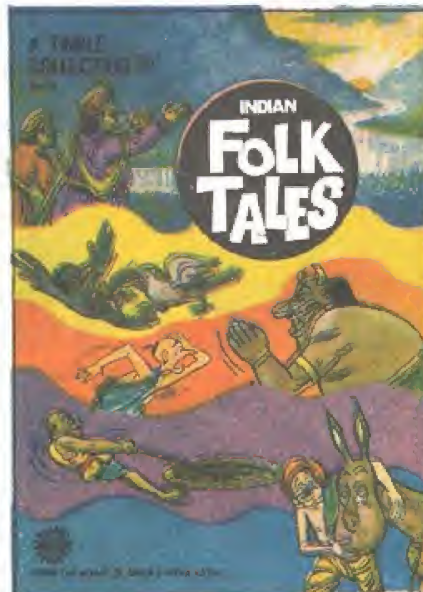
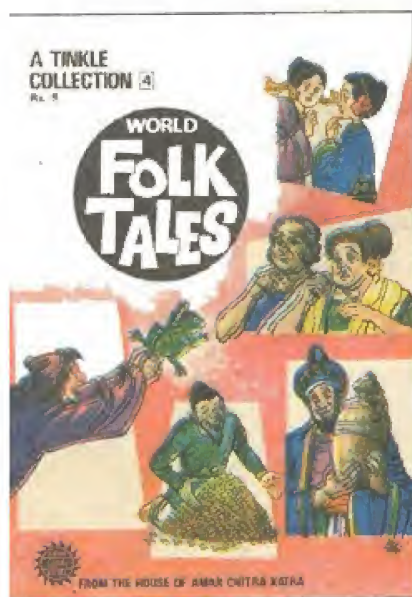
YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING HERE FOR MONTHS NOW. CAN'T YOU TELL WHICH OF THE POMEGRANATES IS SWEET!



I AM SORRY, SIR. I WAS APPOINTED TO TEND THE TREES, SIR... NOT TASTE THE FRUIT!



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